FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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Since 1949 the purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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Words of Wisdom

A "conversion" is not, as is often assumed, a turning towards a belief. More strictly, it is a turning round, a revolution; it has no primary reference to any external object. As the greater mystics have often understood, "the Kingdom of Heaven is within." To put the matter a little more precisely, the change is fundamentally a readjustment of psychic elements to each other, enabling the whole machine to work harmoniously. There is no necessary introduction of new ideas; there is much more likely to be a casting out of dead ideas which have clogged the vital process. The psychic organism – which in conventional religion is called the "soul" – had not been in harmony with itself; now it is revolving truly on its own axis, and in doing so it simultaneously finds its true orbit in the cosmic system. In becoming one with itself, it becomes one with the universe.

Havelock Ellis

Be careful who you dislike; you may have to spend another lifetime with them.

Seung Sa Nim

There comes a time when an individual becomes irresistible and his action becomes all-pervasive in its effect. This comes when he reduces himself to zero.

Gandhi, quoted by Easwaran

Friends, your day of calling is come; ye are called out of the world, and separated from the world, by the call of the living God.

Margaret Fell

Editorial: PRISONS

The humidity has begun here early this year. Though the ground is very dry and the streams are merely trickles, the air is full of moisture. To one of my temperament, it is deadening.

This afternoon's short showers have given way to breezes. It is their stirring in the tree-tops- the sound of their movement overhead that has drawn me out into the forest this evening to try to write.

Like most of us, I get lost in my circumstances – imprisoned in them. Events and emotions whirl around and through my life. They seem absolute in the occurence, and erase the events, the plans that went before.

It is not easy to remember one's faith or God's reality in the middle of a quarrel. The antagonist, one's own supremely righteous anger, the need to act – all overpower us again and again. Sometimes fear stays our hands, but the reality of our anger and the silent judgements that we make in consequence, thrust us forward into a future where the will to harm moves with us as we rearrange our lives and calculate our future strategies for battles we both seek and fear.

Hopelessness is the consequence of all this. Hopelessness and isolation.

As we retreat further and further into our strategies, our calculations and precautions become an ornate and terrible burden that we push before us into every situation.

We are blinded – trapped between our futures and our pasts.

How odd that God would meet us in the present. How odd to have forgotten.

E.M.

Readers are encouraged to send us the names and addresses of those who would like to receive future issues of Fellowship in Prayer. This bi-monthly publication is available at no charge to anyone who requests it. Please write or telephone our office during business hours: Fellowship in Prayer, 134 Franklin Corner Road, Lawrenceville, New Jersey 08648. Telephone (609) 896-3636. We will be happy to hear from you.

From our Readers

I have been reading "Fellowship in Prayer" this past weekend and find myself very much in tune with your aims and purpose. I feel a lot is accomplished by numbers of people praying for the same reason.

Your February issue and the article *Tracks of Our Ancestors* was of particular interest to me since I am a Native American from Wisconsin. Your portrayal of a bit of Native American religious thought seemed accurate and I enjoyed reading your message.

There are so many needs in the world today that want concentrated prayers that one hardly knows where to start. I hope we can have united efforts by several groups to affect some of the problems we are faced with in today's world.

Because of what happened to Native Americans in the past, I feel a special affinity toward all oppressed people. Being also a Baha'i by religion, I am deeply concerned about the oppression, torture and murder of my fellow Baha'is in Iran. So much is being done by the ruling government in Iran to suppress and even exterminate the Baha'is in that country. The past six years have held unimaginable horror for members of this religious group who are native to Iran.

My hope is that more and more people will realize that the Baha'is of Iran are being martyred because they are loyal to their religious beliefs. With more and more prayers for this problem maybe we can have some effect on what happens there.

Thank you for sharing "Fellowship in Prayer" with me.

Patricia Miller
Stockbridge/Munsee Band
of Mohican Indians

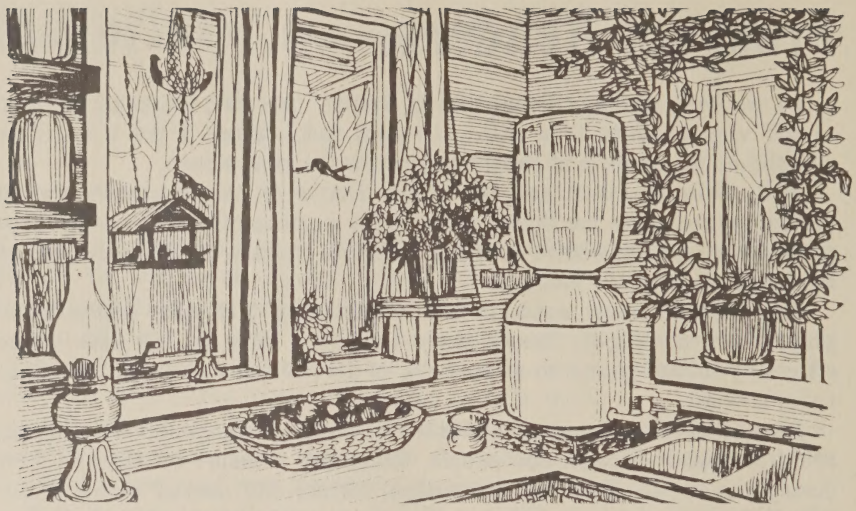
Thanks again for "Fellowship in Prayer." It is one of the most direct and intelligent publications of this sort that I've seen. My interest in reading has fallen away, but your magazine has continued to help me.

Laurie O'Connell, Cumberland, R.I.

Sometimes I appreciate something just because it exists. This is so with the Fellowship. There are some issues that inspire me more than others, but I'm always grateful that the Fellowship is out there, reminding us of our own divinity, our ultimate connection with God and how prayer is the vehicle for these relationships to get nourished.

My God continue to bless your wonderful work.

Karen Gottlieb-Schultze, Monterey, Ma.



Spirituality and Everyday Life

If you would like to share your meditations with other members of the Fellowship, do not hesitate to write. But be sure to keep your writing straightforward and brief (no more than four typewritten pages, or about 1,000 words). We have found that simply sharing the experience of God's love and reality can begin a process of transformation in our own lives and the lives of others. The same may be true for you.

PRAYING WITH THE HEART

It is over a year since this entire drama began, and I must admit that dealing with chemotherapy still tunes me in on the Word of God in my life. I can look back and recognize that special call to intimacy, that particular test of faith, that prevailing deep peace which inundated my heart in spite of the threat of cancer. The initial stage of the illness placed me squarely before God in all of my human frailty and fragility. How to pray? The body was praying in the only way it could – acceptance. I was being taught in a new way the art of listening and there is no doubt in my mind that Centering Prayer or Contemplative Prayer was my heart prayer, my lifeline. How wonderful to have such a powerful tool in time of need.

In its simplest definition, prayer is a relationship with God which matures and deepens with the years. Needless to say, encounters with sickness deepen that relationship. Listening rather than conversing becomes the all-important activity. In those quiet moments, silent prayer became a reality for me, and the presence of the Lord within me was a great strength. Indeed, to know with certainty that Christ was and still is in the midst of my vulnerability is

a profound prayer experience. Surrender becomes the key attitude. Surrender leads you to saying YES to the present moment.

Real prayer, therefore, is an ever increasing presence to God in stillness. Being with God and allowing Him to love me as He wills can be a painful experience. Prayer brings me in touch with the Divine Source of healing. Through this experience of suffering, I have felt far more centered than ever before. This was a real desert moment in my existence, a special invitation to follow the steps of the dance, to catch the rhythm and to freely move along. It was truly dancing in the darkness.

This illness is a new rhythm of the dance, and I must try to harmonize with it. Centering allows me to be with the present moment in all its fullness. The Beloved shows me His face in a very particular way and calls me to follow Him. At each moment, I am being re-created. There is no longer the false hope that happiness is probably elsewhere. In patient endurance, I am ever PRESENT to Him who calls. That is constant prayer.

Sister Pauline Madore

DAILY BREAD

Each day I conclude my morning devotionals by praying very slowly each word and phrase of our Lord's Prayer. As I reflect on the Master's timely words I realize how wisely He chose each phrase to lead our hearts in adoration, forgiveness, guidance and thanksgiving.

Yesterday the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread" suddenly became especially meaningful to me. I am now over fifty eight years old and each day of my life God has faithfully answered that simple request. . .20,272 times! Before I was able to say the words my mother prayed for me. And the same Lord who fed the thousands and who, after His resurrection, cooked breakfast for his hungry disciples, has given me bread and the physical necessities of life. Such is the compassionate providence of God for each of us.

With confidence in Him, a confidence born of long experience, I face tomorrow knowing His "is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever. Amen."

Bob O'Rourke

WAITING AND PRAYER

Waiting is a problem for many of us. We are apt to become irritated while waiting in the grocery checkout line when a customer and the clerk visit, at the bank when the shortest line turns out to be the longest because the man at the front is transacting his company's payroll, in the car when the stop light changes, or at the hospital when a loved one is in surgery.

All times of waiting are potentially times of prayer. In Luke's gospel, the last thing Jesus tells his disciples privately is "Rise and pray that you enter not into temptation" (Lk. 22.46). Jesus waited with prayer in the wilderness (Matt. 4) and in the Garden of Gethsemani (Matt. 26.36ff). The Church has two great seasons of waiting, Advent and Lent, when it recollects itself.

Waiting irritates because we allow it to scatter us instead of using it to be collected. The movement to use waiting to be centered is one of the first steps in the contemplative life. It is achieved by paying attention to the basic element of life, breath.

In the Judeo-Christian world it is believed that God created the world by breath, by speaking. He breathed into Adam and Eve to make them living souls. The Sufis believe there is a divine spark within each of us which is fanned when we breathe. In one Buddhist meditation, one inhales to fan the spark within and exhales to give light and heat to the world. Breathing becomes an exercise in compassion.

Concentrate for a moment on your breathing. Where do you take in air? Do you puff or gasp for air? Don't you trust that God will continue to provide it? Take a deep breath. Hold it. Expel it. Now, how do you feel?

Deep breathing has long been associated with meditation and the contemplative way because it calms and centers the breather. It's very easy to learn. All you need to remember is "bottom-top, bottom-top." Fill yourself with breath by filling the "stomach" first and then the lungs. (Push out your stomach before swelling you chest.) When you exhale, collapse the diaphram first, and then the lungs. Fill lower to upper and exhale lower to upper.

Experiment with a small pause between the inhale and the exhale. Imagine your breath as a ribbon going in and out as you breathe. This is very relaxing and healthy, no matter what else you attach to it.

This week you can transform your waiting time to practice the prayer of breath. Instead of becoming irritated and scattered and filled with anger, breathe. Take ten deep, leisurely breaths. Do it for its own sake, and to center you on the source of life which is graciously provided around you all the time.

Such a small exercise addresses in practical terms the fact that, for believing persons, history is both in process and already fulfilled. This transforms our waiting. When we learn to use waiting for prayer in a simple matter, like waiting for the kettle to boil, it becomes more natural in big situations, like waiting for a job to open up, waiting for the doctor's report, or waiting for that great moment when we die into the fullness of life.

Bonnie Bowman Thurston

On Temptation

Eknath Easwaran

On the one hand, God was calling me. On the other, I was following the world. All the things of God gave me great pleasure, yet I was tied and bound to those of the world.

– Teresa of Avila

Temptation is not a word many people seize upon nowadays to account for their more difficult states of mind. It has a quaint ring, especially when used in conjunction with "the devil." Yet if you have ever had to come to grips with a strong, palpably destructive drive, these traditional expressions will seem neither exaggerated nor archaic.

It is one thing if you are content to go limp and be dragged down the years by one fierce desire after another. But if you find this a less than dignified posture and decide to draw the line here and there, it takes little time to see the truth in those words from the Book of Job: "The life of man upon earth is a life of temptation."

As for the devil, I have come more and more to appreciate the tactical wisdom of giving face and form to the elusive dark side of ourselves that manifests itself as temptation. When we obey the will to pursue private, selfish desires, we are in hell here and now. The devil is right at our elbow, poisoning life with the sulphurous fumes of insecurity and the nagging fear that at any minute some petty craving or other might be denied.

To personify this lower self, which Meister Eckhart calls "the Usurper," might seem hopelessly unsophisticated to a post-Freudian generation. But it is sound spiritual strategy. The will to separateness is so ugly and distasteful that unless we can see a certain distance between this drive and our deeper selves, we hardly care to look at it at all. And look we must if we are ever to disentangle ourselves from it in word, thought, and deed.

The modern approach to emotional suffering is often highly intellectual. People are willing to spend endless hours – and dollars – sorting out their problems: my complex, your syndrome, his neurosis, her identity crisis. Instead, Thomas a Kempis suggests, we can save a lot of energy by recognizing that emotional and spiritual health has one common enemy. The devil's long, thrashing tail, his cloven feet and pointed horns, his blood-red jump suit, are apt, personal reminders that each time we behave harshly or plan a course of action based on ordinary greed, we are giving in to the less-than-human side of ourselves.

In the course of a day, temptations can hit you from every quarter. In the middle of the afternoon, despite your diet, you feel a burning need for french friend onion rings; at home a piece of sarcasm rises which is so inspired you would be cheating the world to withhold it. But the tempter is always the same, says Thomas, although "his number is legion." There is even a certain comfort in the knowledge that the fly in our personal ointment is the same seedy character who has made life miserable for human beings from time immemorial. "No man is so perfect and holy," Thomas observes drily, "but he hath sometimes temptations: and altogether without them we cannot be."

When you take up spiritual disciplines, you are serving notice or "the Usurper" that his days in the driver's seat are numbered. At firs he will take the announcement with stoic amusement. After all, he has seen you through other fads: Kirlian photography, the Zen of skate boarding, raising orchids, learning the twelve-string banjo. Meditation looks to him like more of the same. "It's good, clean fun," he reflects "but I think my lease is still good."

As long as he feels unthreatened, the disciplines go smoothly. But after a few months, he begins to get alarmed. Now he calls in a strong ally – mind. It can be terribly disturbing when, in the midst of trying to climb the Mount Carmel within, you hear below you voices calling from Death Valley: "Come back down. Just think of all the pleasures you are leaving behind!" But there is a bright side, as Thomas Kempis reminds us:

> All the saints passed through many tribulations and temptations and

> profited thereby. And they that could not bear temptations, became reprobate and fell away. There is no order so holy, nor place so secret, where there be not temptations, or adversities.

Before his famous conversion experience, Augustine describes how attachments to all kinds of selfish satisfactions came and clustered about him, "plucking at my garment of flesh and murmuring softly, 'Are you sending us away? Forever?' " If such voices can come to a spiritual giant like Augustine, there is no reason why you and I should be distressed by them. Instead, as Thomas a Kempis suggests, look upon them in a positive light. The next time a temptation steps onto your path, flexing his muscles and leering confidently, steal around and get a look at his back. "Irresistible" may be stamped in boldface across the front of his T-shirt, but in gleaming gold on the back, the words "Spiritual Opportunity" appear.

In his *Talks of Instruction*, Meister Eckhart has a chapter with an intriguing title: "How the Inclination to Sin is Always Beneficial." He explains:

> The impulse to wrong makes us the more diligent in the exercise of virtue, driving us to it with a strong hand, like a hard taskmaster, forcing us to take shelter in doing well. The weaker one is, the more he is warned to strength and self-conquest, for virtue, like vice, is a matter of the will.

The muscles of the will can be strengthened in only one and that is by mastering desires. Little by little, starting with small skirmishes, you can develop the will to withstand the most awesome challenge. Temptations of the dining room or department store might seem ridiculously insignificant. But each time you master one self-centered desire, however small, you emerge – as you will see – so much the stronger.

The reason? Desire is power: like crude oil, or the force of a mountain stream. It can work against you, pulling you this way and that against your will; or, harnessed, it can works for you, carrying you all the way to the summit of consciousness.

Anyone who has struggled to throw off a tenacious craving or addiction inevitably faces one question: Where does this sharp-toothed desire come from? That it is rooted in ourselves we are prepared to accept. But what exactly is the origin? Thomas takes up the question now.

> The beginning of all evil temptations is inconstancy of mind, and small confidence in God. For as a ship without a helm is tossed to and fro with the waves, so the man who is remiss, and apt to leave his purpose,

is many ways tempted.

I like to state the situation positively: The end of all temptations is constancy of mind and full confidence in the Lord within. Evenness of mind – being "unflappable" – is a quality you can count on in every man or woman of God.

It is a curious comment on modern civilization that we place so high a premium on *un*evenness of mind: that is, on excitement. "You're off to the university? Wonderful. You'll have an exciting time." "I just got that promotion, and we're really excited about it." The underlying assumption – that the person whose mind is frothing over with excitement is one to envy – goes almost unquestioned.

Yet take a moment to recall the last time you got really excited. If you can recall the consequences, the chances are you'd just as soon forget. For it is when the mind is most whipped up, even over something extremely pleasurable, that we are most likely to eat a third helping of canneloni, or overlook a stop sign, or speak to our supervisor more frankly than we had intended. Clearly there is some confusion: excitement seems so desirable, yet generally it does not deliver what we desire.

The problem is that we mistake agitation for fulfillment, excitement for joy. If the mind is not turbulent, we think we're in a slump and start groping about for something that can stir it up again: a cup of coffee, a thrill-packed movie, a stiff drink, a drug, a spirited quarrel, anything to "get the juices flowing." Those who go at life like this, Thomas says, are like ships without a rudder. They scarcely know they have a harbor, and they are at the mercy of every passing squall.

The man or woman whose eyes are fixed on a spiritual goal can see far beyond the immediate appeal of short-term satisfactions. That is the miraculous secret behind their self-control. Confident that a far greater joy is theirs, they can hold out against the voices from all sides that cajole, "Eat this, drink that, watch this, buy that." Granted, "evil temptations" seems an overstatement of the case against such innocuous forms of indulgence. Yet seen in their long-range cumulative impact, that is just what they are.

Thomas a Kempis cites the danger in being "apt to leave our purpost." For many of us, however, the more fundamental issue is whether we have a purpose worth pursuing in the first place. Making money is not a purpose, and piling up possessions, however tasteful they may be, is not a goal. An overriding purpose helps to stabilize the mind, where profit and possessions do just the opposite. A few months ago I visited a stockbroker's office and sat

for almost an hour watching people follow the Dow Jones index scintillating across the board. Shares would creep up, and some people would beam at one another. Shares would subside, and I heard profound sighs. "What kind of world is this?" one man remarked. It was as if, when the Dow moved, their minds *had* to follow.

When this up and down thinking becomes habitual, the mind loses all stability. It may not be shares that are at stake, yet each of us has attention staked on some personal investment – success at work, social attractiveness, skill in some sport or game – that dictates our security. Any variation in the standing of our stake can send us flying: toward the vending machines, into the deli or the cocktail lounge, after whatever prop promises to hold us up.

The best way to keep the goal of spiritual awareness before you is to repeat the Holy Name in your mind whenever you are doing something that does not require attention. When you repeat "Jesus, Jesus" as you go through the cafeteria line or wait for the bus, you are remainding yourself what you truly want out of life. The thousand and one choices that make up a day light up with new meaning. Everything matters, because you recognize that every action, even every thought, has the power to retard or advance your journey.

It is only when the mind is fickle, darting from one object to another, that we are prey to the minor foibles that have worked their way into our consciousness. The Holy Name unifies attention and helps us keep a steady course no matter what is happening around us. When we have been repeating the Holy Name for a long time, temptations cannot even get a foot in the door without a "by your leave."

When a powerful desire is suddenly upon you, towering overhead like a tidal wave, it may seem to have come out of nowwhere. But the trained eye ("Be watchful!" says Thomas) can spot these waves when they are the merest ripple, way offshore. You see the wave not as an isolated event now, but as one element of a process a long time in the making. You can arrest it before it has the chance to overwhelm you – or, if it has already swollen and is about to roll over you, you can learn to ride upon it like a skilled surfer.

It is meditation itself that extends our vision this way, largely by slowing down the thought process. You come to see your own mental activity as you would a motion picture going through the projector frame by frame. Thomas a Kempis shows us now what a wave of temptation looks like when viewed like this in slow mo-

tion. He takes us through the process step by inexorable step, from the first faint swell on the horizon to the moment when, full-force, the urge plunges us headlong into swirling sand.

Imagine being engaged in a tug-of-war where one by one your teammates quietly desert you and go over to the other side. You can hold out for a while, heels skidding in the dirt, arms aching with the exertion, but finally you are pulled over the line – defeated, perversely enough, by your own friends. This is what it is like to try to resist a powerful desire if you have not gained some mastery over your own mind. Present an attractive object to the mind and it cannot help itself. One stray thought goes after that object, then another, then another. Soon the mind has no other thought but "I *must* have that!" All your vital energy is tied up in the desire, and no will is left to resist.

This picture would be bleak but for one important fact: the whole process can be reversed. A desire has no more strength over you than what you give it – every time you dwell on it, every time you yield to it. The most effective way I can think of to resist a desire, in fact, is to remind yourself, "If I give in now, it's going to be even harder to resist the next time!"

It would be poor sportsmanship indeed if the Lord were to throw us into the arena of life, loose the lions upon us, and then leave us to our own devices. But this is not his way. When he sends us a temptation, he also grants the weapons with which to resist it. That is why Thomas a Kempis urges us, when temptation's hot breath is on our neck, "the more fervently to pray unto God." By moving closer to the Lord in meditation, by calling on him night and day with his Holy Name, by striving to carry out all the disciplines that wise spiritual counselors have recommended through their own lives, we can gradually identify ourselves with the Lord so completely that we have access to everything that is His. We learn love without limit, courage without fail, wisdom that can penetrate the toughest problems life offers.

The more we get ourselves out of the way and learn to rely on the Lord within, the more effortlessly He can do His work through us. This great transformation is hastened not only by the tests we pass with flying colors but even – if we learn from them – by those we fail. This is one of those puzzling paradoxes that become self-evident in our personal experience: when we are making every effort, the power to be pure is ultimately a gift of grace. Philip of Neri speaks for all of us when he cries out with utter sincerity, "O Lord, put no trust in me; for I shall surely fail if thou upholdest me not."

Saving Places of the Spirit

Notes from a talk by the Rev. W. Brown Morton, III

Bauddanath, Kathmandu Valley, 17th c. Buddhist stupa and a center for several Tibetan monastic communities.

The Reverend W. Brown Morton, III, an Episcopal priest from Waterford, Virginia, spoke about "holy places" at a recent gathering of Fellowship in Prayer. Over the past twenty years his work has taken him as far afield as Indonesia, Nepal, Vietnam, the People's Republic of China, Turkey, and the Soviet Union. "In the context of that exposure to other cultures and indeed to other religions," Morton told his audience, "I have noted how many historical landmarks are in fact holy places and how much of the heritage we seek to preserve in the world has its roots in the spiritual dimension. That, of course, has excited very much the side of my life that is as a servant of God."

The Varieties of Holy Places

During his talk Morton spoke of the "tremendous numinous quality, the power, that so many holy places have." He showed slides of holy mountains, holy stones, holy rivers, and even holy gorges, as well as churches, cathedrals, mosques, and temples. According to Morton, holy places fall into two basic

categories: "places where God has made Himself known to man, and places where men have chosen to go in hopes that God would find them." Morton observed that "God uses both the natural and man-made in His manifestations to us."

Morton distinguished between man-made places that cover or commemorate a holy person or holy site, and structures which are in themselves objective works of art. St. Peter's in the Vatican City and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem are, in Morton's view, outstanding examples of the former kind of holy place. One of the greatest examples of the latter kind of holy place is the Temple of Borobudur in Java, Indonesia, which is the largest Buddhist monument ever built in the world. Morton was invited by the government of Indonesia to participate in the restoration of Borobudur and spent from 1975-83 in that endeavor. An article that he wrote about this project appeared in *The National Geographic Magazine* in January 1983.

Preserving Buddha's Birthplace

"One of my favorite holy places is the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal," Morton told his audience. Kathmandu, a region of the Himalayas between India and Tibet, is a rich, alluvial valley noted for its breath-taking beauty. The Nepalese have a deeply traditional culture, and their way of life has not changed fundamentally in thousands of years. Most importantly, in Morton's view, they have managed to keep the sacred and secular in harmony much more successfully than many Western cultures.

In addition to his work in the Kathmandu Valley, one of the most important and interesting projects that engaged Morton was the preservation of the archeological site near Buddha's birthplace in Nepal.

"When I went to Nepal to help the Nepalese government to develop a World Heritage List Nomination for the Kathmandu Valley," Morton explained. "They also asked me to go down to the southern part of Nepal and prepare a Nomination for Lumbini, where the Buddha was born. Lumbini is located in a flat desert plain near the frontier with India, and it's extremely hot and dry. There are no mountains and very little greenery. When I arrived, I discovered that a United Nations development project at Lumbini had just been begun, and that the construction was destroying the archeological site of the ancient Lumbini village. I was profoundly disturbed when I saw this, because to me, it was like bulldozing Bethlehem.

"I worked hard to have the initial construction halted and to get them to modify the Master Plan, which included a large reflecting pond plunk on top of an archeological site. To make the reflecting pond, they had to dig down three and a half meters below ground level, which would have wiped out all the archeological evidence. I tried for over a year to get the Nepalese government to modify the Master Plan so that the construction would not interfere with the archeological work. I tried to do this 'in-house,' and got nowhere, because the United Nations Lumbini Development Program had been the dream of U Thant, and many nations all over the world had been asked to contribute to its implementation. A lot of very important Buddhist countries

had already given generously. Indeed, the design for the project was by a Japanese architect. So for the Nepalese government to go back now and say, 'We don't like it,' would have been an embarassment.

"After a year of trying to work in house and getting nowhere, suddenly, as if by Divine Providence, I received an invitation to speak in Kyoto, Japan. The topic assigned to me was 'Environmental Design Plan for Holy Places.' When I got to the point in my talk where I spoke about 'What Happens When It All Goes Wrong' and described Lumbini, you could hear the gasps in the audience. I had brought all my slides with me, and showed the shards dating back to Buddha's birth that I'd picked up at the site for all to see."

Brown's speech instantly attracted the attention of the media and created a stir not only in Japan, but around the world. Realizing that it was no longer possible to work exclusively through private channels, Morton started writing letters to potential supporters. A friend suggested contacting the Dalai Lama in Dharmsala, India, and Morton immediately wrote a letter explaining the situation. Months passed without a response. Then, just before Morton was to leave for Indonesia, he received a letter from the Director of the Tibetan Library and Archives at Dharmsala offering whole-hearted support. "All Buddhists and all right-thinking people are deeply indebted to you," the letter concluded, "You have taken upon yourself the thankless task of starting a crusade for a most noble cause."

There was also a P.S.: "Next time you come to India, please be good enough to pay a visit to us."

Morton immediately arranged to stop in Dharmsala on his way home from Borobudur. After a hectic and circuitous journey through Kashmir and Punjab, he finally arrived in Lower Dharmsala and was greeted by a robed Tibetan monk who said, "Your name is Brown Morton, you were born on January 7, 1938, and I have your photograph." "My goodness," Morton thought, "the Dalai Lama's staff certainly knows how to do their homework thoroughly!"

Changing the Karma of the World

"For the next week I was in a state of bliss much of the time," Morton confessed. "The scenery was incredible, and the monks were super." Besides discussing the situation in Lumbini, Morton had a chance to spend a few hours each day engaging with some of monks in a Buddhist-Christian dialogue.

"In the afternoon after lunch I would go over to the Tibetan Library and Archives Building, and a group of three or four lamas would meet there, and we would talk together on mutually agreed-upon subjects. If someone didn't understand, he would raise his hand and ask for a clarification. When we gathered that first day, we looked at each other and asked ourselves, 'Where should we begin?' It was clear that we were a group of four or five people who felt at home with each other, so that there was no jostling for leadership. I think that we all accepted each other as men of good will. When we discussed where we might begin, it seemed to all of us that we might begin with something we shared rather than with something we did not share, and we realized that what we shared was prayer. So we began with prayer.

"We had already spent some time in the temple together in the mornings, so we felt comfortable with each other, and this was not 'terra incognita' for anyone. We were, however, in a sense, virgin minds for one another. It was rare for me to meet Buddhists who had not been educated in the West, and therefore familiar with Judaeo-Christian vocabulary and concepts. Likewise, these particular monks had never sat down before with a Christian priest. Their knowledge of Christianity was not non-existent, but it was not focussed. It was an awareness that Christianity was a major world religion, and that this religion centered on the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and many had seen Christmas cards and heard people talk of Christianity, but never before had they sat down face to face with a Christian priest to talk about or share what one might call 'the God experience.'

"As we began our discussion of prayer, the Tibetan monks, being my hosts and also the politest people in the world, asked me to go first and speak of Christian prayer. Since I think that when talking about Christianity to people who are not Christians, it is wise to start with Jesus and go from there, I began with the Lord's prayer, of which Jesus said, 'When you pray, pray like this.' I started reading the Lord's prayer, and I wasn't very far into it – I had just gotten to the part 'Our Father Who Art in Heaven' – when several hands went up, and and one of the lamas said to me, 'What means "Our Father?" ' That led into the most wonderful discussion. What we came to see, the five of us together, was that root idea for Christianity, without which the religion does not hold together, is the concept of the Creator God. There is no concept of a Creator God in Buddhism. It isn't that they have thought of it and discarded the idea, the concept of 'Our Father Who Art in Heaven' simply isn't there. So we had a wonderful time building an understanding together of what we Christians mean by 'Our Father Who Art in Heaven.'

"Likewise, at another session, we were discussing the subject of sacraments. Again I started with Jesus, with the Lord's supper and our prayer of consecration at the Eucharist. I was sharing those words of Jesus with them, 'After supper He took the cup of wine,' and everybody nodded their understanding, 'Yes, yes.' 'And when he had given thanks, he gave it to them saying. . . .' 'Yes, yes.' 'Drink this all of you, this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for you.' 'Yes, yes.' 'For the remission of sins.' At these words, all the monks raised their hands. 'What means "the remission of sins?" ' they asked. Again we had come across one of those central root beliefs in Christianity that simply isn't there in Buddhism – the idea of atonement, that Jesus' death and resurrection, to put it in Buddhist terms, somehow changed the karma of the world. This is a wonderful idea that we talked about for some time.

"Our time together was built of moments like that, where we would share each other views, by sticking to fairly central texts or concepts, and then being very honest with one another when we hit an idea that was not common to the other person. We had a tremendous respect for each other's traditions. No one at the table was trying to talk anyone else into or out of anything. We shared with one another how we had been touched by the All, and how we understood the All to be operating in our lives."

Meeting With A Remarkable Man

At the end of the week, to his surprise and delight, Morton was invited to meet the Dalai Lama in person. Arriving at the Dalai Lama's "palace" — what in fact is a pleasant modern bungalo dating back to the 1950's — Morton was frisked by the guards to make sure that he carried no weapons, and then he was taken to an antechamber where he could sit for a while and collect himself.

Just before being introduced, Morton noticed the Dalai Lama saying goodbye to a European woman whose daughter was a Buddhist nun and lived at Dharmsala, and who had spent breakfast time in the Guest House incessantly complaining about everything from the food to the weather. "I had conceived a deep and silent dislike for this woman's nagging," Brown confessed, "but when I saw her with the Dalai Lama, her face was radiant and her negativity was gone. This, I realized, is what real love could do."

"When it was my turn for an audience," Brown continued, "I was led into a large room furnished in semi-Western style, with couches, and I thought to myself, 'What do you say to the Dalai Lama?' Then this inner voice said, 'Brown, for once in your life, shut up and don't speak until you're spoken to!' And so I just walked into the room and waited and decided to just flow into the moment and see what happened. The Dalai Lama took my hand and looked me right into the eye — it was real eye contact — and he maintained eye contact for thirty seconds to a minute. Now that was good, but it was also hard — it's hard to let someone know you in that way. However, I felt immediately put at my ease by the tremendous warmth and compassion of this man.

"After this long time of eye contact, without letting go of my hand, he led me to the couch and sat me down. He then let go of my hand, and continuing to maintain eye contact, he said to me in this wonderful, deep voice perfected by years of chanting: 'Why are you here?' I knew that he knew perfectly well why I was here, but he evidently wanted to hear it from me, so I took out my little pieces of pottery, spread them out on the table, and spent nearly an hour explaining to him the situation at Lumbini. At the end of it, he said to me, 'What do you want me to do for you?' I said that I wanted him to contact the King of Nepal and ask him to modify the Master Plan

for Lumbini so that the archeology would be adequately protected.' He thought about it for a minute, and then he said, 'I will contact my people in Kathmandu and if His Majesty is not already of another mind, I will do what you ask. But if His Majesty is of another mind, nothing that I might do would change that.' So I said, 'Thank you very much.' I thought that the audience was over, but the Dalai Lama said that he had never been to Borobudur, and he wanted me to tell him all about it.

"When I was finished, it was clear that my audience was over. He lifted me up by the elbow again, walked me to the middle of the room, we had some more good eye contact, and then he asked thoughtfully, 'Is there anything else you would like to ask me?' 'Well,' I said, 'As a matter of fact, there is. I am dying to have my picture taken with you. Would you come out in the courtyard and have your picture taken with me?' He said, and I quote, 'Sure.'

"After we got out into the courtyard, he said, 'Where would you like to have your picture taken?' Looking quickly around, I said, 'Here.' So we went over there, and I put a very rigid, self-conscious 'I-am-having-my-picture-taken-with-the-Dalai-Lama' expression, when suddenly the Dalai Lama said, 'No! You can't have your picture taken here.' And I thought, 'Uh oh, am I standing on something unmentionable or super holy?' I asked, 'Why not?' And he said, 'Look, the sunlight is shining on the lens of your camera. You have to come over here.' So he led me around into the shade, and click! we had our picture taken. He thanked me very much for coming, and I thanked him for receiving me, and then I was taken in his jeep the next day back to Jammu in Kashmir, and flew home."

Someone asked whether all of these efforts had in fact preserved the archeological site at Lumbini.

"Yes," Morton replied, "Last year, when the King of Nepal was here, I had a chance to meet him. When there was a lull in the conversation with someone else, I leapt in and said, 'Your Majesty, there is something I'd like to say to you.' He said, 'What is it?' And in thirty seconds I told him what I hoped he would do, and he said he'd look into it. In addition, the Dalai Lama and his staff had done everything they could – they even contacted the Asian Buddhist Conferenece for Peace in Ulan Bator, Mongolia. As a result, the government of Nepal sent the head of the Royal Nepal Academy with a leading Indian archeologist down to Lumbini to see what the fuss was about. He came back to me and said, 'Mr. Morton, you are absolutely right. There is a real threat to the archeology.' Happily, about a year ago, I received a letter from the United States Committee for the United Nations Lumbini Development Project saying that the Project Committee voted not to undertake any construction until all the archeological issues had been studied thoroughly and that the Committee would even consider changes in the Master Plan to meet all archeological needs."

Morton concluded, "Should St. Peter let me into heaven, one of the first people I hope to meet will be an aging Nepalese gentleman who will come up to me looking very much like the Buddha, and say simply 'Thank you.' "

– Anthony Manousos

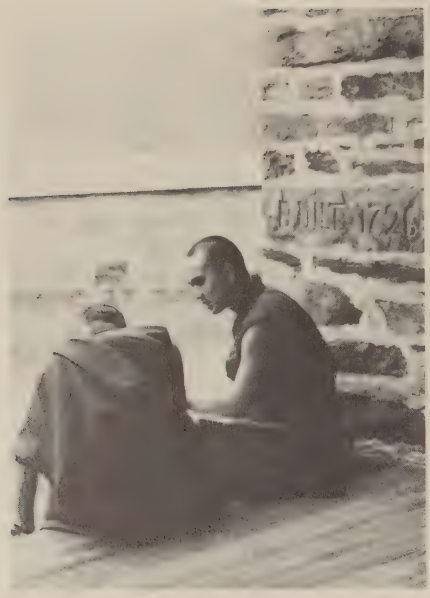
A Musical Blessing: The Gyuto Tantric Monks

Fellowship in Prayer was pleased to assist the recent appearances of the Gyuto Tantric Monks in central New Jersey. Travelling under the sponsorship of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, the American Landmarks Festivals Inc., and the Office of Tibet, the Gyuto Monks have presented demonstrations of Tibetan Tantric chants at the American Museum of Natural History, the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., the Rothko Chapel in Houston, the Museum of Fine Arts in San Francisco, and at many other outstanding locations during this, their first North American visit.

We would like to extend our deepest thanks to those whose cooperation has made this unique opportunity for inter-religious and inter-cultural exchange possible: Mike Tayyabkhan and friends at Mobil Oil Corp., Dean Jacquelyn Schecter, the faculty and students at Westminster Choir College, the Princeton Friends Meeting, Prof. Ken Morgan, the Graduate Student Association of Rutgers University, Mr. John Cooney of the Office of Community Affairs and Peggy Corcoran of Kirkpatrick Chapel at Rutgers, Giga Andreyev and our friends of the Kalmuk Association in Howell, N.J., Joshua Cutler of the Lamaist Buddhist Monastery in America, and all who helped with their time, resources, and hospitality. Thank you.

These rites originated in the fifteenth century when they were introduced into Tibet from India by the great sage Tsonkhapa. The deep sound of Tantric chanting imparts a subliminal blessing even to people who are not Buddhists or to people who do not know what it is.

Abbot Lungri Namgyal



Tantra is protection of the mind. If one asks 'Protection against what?' one responds that it is protection against ordinary appearances and our compulsive attraction for them.

The Dalai Lama

A quiet moment at the Princeton Meeting House, where monks were hosted by Friends.

At Kirkpatrick Chapel, Rutgers, with John Cooney, Director of Community Affairs

At Asbury Park, N.J., during their stay with Kalmuk (Mongolian Buddhist) community.

In 1950, China invaded Tibet and a period of great suffering for the Tibetan people began, of which the experience of the Gyuto Monks is sadly typical. Of nine hundred monks in their monastery at the time of the invasion, only one hundred have survived to find refuge in northern India. Over one million Tibetans are reported to have perished. It is hoped that the visit of the Gyuto Monks will help them in their effort to preserve their religious and cultural heritage for the spiritual enrichment of all beings.

Readers desiring further information are invited to contact the Office of Tibet, 801 Second Ave. N.Y., N.Y. 10017.

The Old Fellow Retires...

As a teenager at the end of the First World War, browsing in my favorite bookstore in Cologne, I was led by intuition to a little book with the mysterious title Tao-te-Ching *by Lao-Tsu, eighty-one short sayings by a sage who lived in China six hundred years before the birth of Christ. They became guideposts in the turmoil of my life, often showing me the way out of a maze of conflicting thoughts and events. They became an enduring gospel, one that St. Francis could have preached. Ultimately Lao-Tsu led me through Zen Buddhism to "the Light Within," "the Quiet Inner Voice" of George Fox, the Quaker, and to the Peaceable Kingdom of Isaiah.*

Little is known of Lao-Tsu. He may have been of peasant stock, but became an archivist at the court of a Chinese ruler, and disappeared, crossing over to the West on a buffalo, at the age of eighty. No manuscript remains of his sayings, no image of his face, but his spirit lives and reached me in that tiny bookstore in Cologne.

Fritz Eichenberg

"Old Fellow," the noble called out, "you go quickly, but where are you going?"

Lao-tze hurled the words back over his shoulder. "I am withdrawing from Chou."

"Withdrawing!" shouted the noble. "You are an old man, and where will you go?"

Lao-tze glared but said nothing. He tried to move on, but the noble grasped him by the arm and held fast.

"Will you go to Shu or to Pa," he asked, laughing. "Or will you succour our enemies in Ch'in and Yueh?"

"They are no better than Chou," said the Old Fellow, angrily and yet quietly.

The noble put back his head and roared. "You are withdrawing, but you have nowhere to withdraw to." And he turned halfway around and shouted so that all in the courts might hear, "The Old Fellow is running away from Chou, but he will not go to Ch'in, for he doesn't know where he is running to."

Lao-tze made a move to go on, but the noble held fast.

"Come," he said, "you must take the bath, change to a more suitable garment, and take ceremonious leave of the duke."

The Old Fellow wrenched his arm free and started off for the road, but out of the palace ran ministers and nobles and even some servants.

"He is not only withdrawing," cried the noble in shocked tones, "but he is withdrawing without ceremony."

Then a great cry went up, and all rushed after the Old Fellow, surrounding him even as he reached the edge of the street. And other persons of the court came running out of the duke's buildings, while those passing on the street saw a great concourse of people, stopped, and stood on tiptoe the better to see. All they saw was a small man with white hair, dressed in a poor garment, surrounded by nobles and ministers.

But the face of the small man with white hair shone with such anger and wrath that those near him stepped back. Yet Lao-tze took no notice of those standing about him, and when he spoke it was as if he spoke only to himself.

A common fellow in the back of the crowd hooted, saying, "It is only the nobles and ministers arguing about that which has no meaning to us."

A minister cried out, "This talk of withdrawing is treason."

"He is only an old fool and harmless," one of the nobles answered.

"He has become angry," taunted a high minister, "because we have not honoured his cheap theories and coarse words."

But there was one minister who neither laughed nor grew angry. "He is an old man," said that minister, "and he should have the decent respect due all men of great years."

"Consider," said a high official, "that you will be taking leave of your family."

"He is so old," someone explained, "that he has outlived everybody, even his children, so that not one of us knows the name of his wife or even the name of his father."

"He has indeed lived past his time," said an official. "Sir, if you leave what will become of your reputation? Here you have the status of an official of Chou. Here you even have fame of a sort. But wherever you go, you will be without rank and position. Think well before you withdraw."

"Old Fellow," said another official, "to go somewhere, you must think of somewhere to go to. You will not go to Shu, you will not go to Ch'in. Where will you go? Will you go to your birthplace?"

But Lao-tze had not even heard him.

"Let him go to the barbarians," called out a voice toward the rear of the group.

There was instantly much jesting and laughing.

But Lao-tze said, "Very well, I shall go to the barbarians."

A sudden and strained silence fell upon those in the crowd, and each man stepped back involuntarily.

"He thinks the barbarians are better than we are," someone said

in an awed whisper.

"He insults us," declared one of the nobles.

There arose a great outcry of curses and jibes, but of them Lao-tze took no notice. Someone shook a fist, and the crowd surged ominously forward. Lao-tze turned his head to the right and then to the left, and his eyes burned into the eyes of each man around him; and each man stepped back. And Lao-tze moved his feet to take the first step of his journey.

But at that instant there was a commotion at the gate of the palace, and the greatest of all of the ministers came forth. He walked heavily over the courtyard, and the crowd parted so that he might come through.

"Sir," he said sternly, "you are withdrawing, but you have not observed ceremony. You have not requested leave of the duke; you have not divined; nor have you offered sacrifices." And the great minister drew himself up to his best height and showed on his face his displeasure.

Lao-tze looked at him. He looked at the crowd of nobles and officials and ministers about him. He looked at their bright robes, their rich girdles. He caught the gleam of the sun on their bronze and jade pendants. He saw their thick bellies, their fat jowls. He heard the tone of their voices, at once harsh and refined. And how could he keep from laughing? His face broke, his body relaxed, and his shoulders shook as he chuckled.

Angry, the high minister shouted out, "You show no respect. If you persist, I will have the duke send you to exile."

Now the Old Fellow knew that he was already outside the prison of Chou, and he felt only amusement at the sight of so many rich nobles trying to argue with him.

"I am going into exile," he said, still laughing.

Then the greatest of the ministers changed countenance, and he swung on his heel and rushed back into the palace.

Lao-tze, still chuckling, walked into the crowd, which parted before him, and he made his way up the road.

But how could those standing in the crowd on the street let him leave thus? "He has laughed at us," said one of the nobles. "Let us follow behind him and laugh for our own part."

Then those in the crowd rushed after him, hooting and jeering; and as the crowd moved, those passing by joined in to see what was happening. A great concourse of people, jostling their way through the winding narrow streets of the Chou capital, followed the Old Fellow. Dogs, aroused by the excitement, ran behind barking and baying. The uproar could he heard even in the fields outside the walls.

As for Lao-tze, he walked straight ahead, not bothering even to keep the edge of his garment out of the mud of the streets. Nor did he look behind him. Thus he came to the walls of the city.

But even as he was going out through the gate, one of those following cried out, "Old Fellow, how will you travel? Will you travel with talk, and make stories to pay your expenses?"

"How can one such as he," hooted another, "walk more than one part in ten of the distance?"

Now at that moment a farmer came past, trying to pull after him a large water buffalo. But the beast, unruly, snorted and tossed with his horns. One instant he would not follow, and the next he would charge at the farmer who led him. And the nobles and ministers ran to the side of the road to give way before the wild animal.

"He is just like the Old Fellow," shouted one of the nobles.

"Let us give him to the Old Fellow to travel with," suggested an official, laughing.

"It will be a farewell present and in perfect propriety," snorted one of the ministers.

Thereupon, everyone laughed, and one of the nobles gave a piece of money to the farmer, and the farmer put the tether rope into the hand of the Old Fellow.

Lao-tze turned and smiled at the crowd that had followed him. He put one hand on the back of the water buffalo and for an instant studied the eyes of the animal. With a quick jump he pulled himself on to its back, sat upright, and folded his legs under him. The animal did not offer to bolt. Then Lao-tze pressed with one heel into the back of the buffalo, and the beast moved off through the gate of the capital city of Chou.

The crowd at the gate stood silent and open-mouthed. The farmer rubbed his head in bewilderment. Lao-tze, jogging up and down easily on top of the water buffalo, turned his back upon Chou and looked toward the hills.

Behind him were the archives, the courtyards and palaces of Chou, the streets and the houses and the walls of the city. Around him were the fields, light green with the spring planting. Water moved gently through the streams in the valleys and lay quiet in the moist earth of the fields. In the fields themselves, farmers ploughed in the furrows to ease the earth on each side of the beans and the millet.

Ahead there were hills, low hills and undulating; the distance to the mountains was too great for the seeing of them. But the hills were rich green; and trees, covering the cliffs of the hills and dotting the edges of fields, gave shade green and cool.

Lao-tze sat on the back of the buffalo, and he let all thoughts leave his mind. He neither looked back nor thought back. He only looked at the fields and the hills and streams in front of him. He had broken out of the prison.

From The Old Fellow *(John Day, N.Y.: 1944), a fictionalized account of Lao-Tsu's life by Herrymon Maurer, who is retiring from Fellowship in Prayer in order to write about John Woolman. Our prayers and best wishes go with him!*

Pilgrims and Strangers

Sometimes the urge to break away, to chuck all the nonsense of one's life and start afresh, becomes almost irresistible. One's family, friends, and current job seem utterly impossible. "If it weren't for them," insists an inner voice we all know too well, "I could become the kind, enlightened, spiritual person I know I am intended to be."

Obviously that's the wrong reason to stir abroad, as all the wise teachers insist. "Without going out of doors," says Lao-Tse, "You can know beneath-heaven's way. The farther you go, the less you know." The Quaker Francis Howgill put it with homely forcefulness: "Why gad you abroad? Return home to within, sweep your houses all, and here you will see your Teacher not removed into a corner, but present when you are upon your beds and about your labour. . . ." With poignant irony, the Greek poet Kavafy describes a friend who kept imagining that he would find happiness in another city, but is doomed to carry around with him the source of all his misery, himself.

Yet staying put is not always the right course. All the great teachers – Lao-Tse, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammud – left their familiar surroundings, often at great risk, and sought a new perspective in a new land. The commonest metaphors for the spiritual life is that of a journey, a pilgrimage or exile. And as we look about and see the spiritual bondage into which many people in our society have fallen, it is tempting to follow the example of the Jews and leave our modern Egypt with its cult of egotism, materialism and death.

How can one know when the desire to escape from spiritual bondage is not escapism? And how can one determine the precise moment when a departure is called for, when "a way openeth" – to use a Quaker expression – for a new mode of life?

There is no pat answer to such questions. In the past, I have always been tempted to pack my bags and take off whenever the going become intolerable. Sitting tight doesn't come easy to a descendant of immigrants, especially a Greek immigrant with romantic ties to Odysseus. Most Americans are descendants of restless people – pilgrims, immigrants, refugees and plain old drifters. By and large, my friends and neighbors are essentially people of mobile homes, with roots in a community that seldom go any deeper than a generation or two.

It is perhaps for this reason that we yearn for a place where we feel we belong – a community whose roots go deeper than merely common interests, common habits, and sometimes common compulsions. Over the years I have sought such a community in various places and through various institutions, but I have always been disappointed. Only recently have I discovered that the community I seek is "not of this world," and yet it is all around me.

The community I am speaking of consists of people who have committed themselves to the way of compassion and truth. They consist of all kinds of people – members of A.A., Buddhist monks, householders, carpenters,

friends, and strangers. I don't have to leave my own backyard to find them – I only have to leave myself open.

As I set out this summer to travel across the country, I don't know what will happen, or what to expect. When I travelled and was guided by self-will, I was essentially a tourist of the spirit and saw only what I wanted, and what I was programmed to see. Travelling in and for the community of faith is quite a different experience. I don't know what I will find, but I am sure that there is much to learn, and to share, along the way.

A.M.

Centers of Interest

KIRKPATRICK CHAPEL, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J. Corner of George and Somerset Streets. (201) 932-7808. A very special space in central New Jersey for people of all faiths.

The weekly service (Sunday, 11:00 a.m.) is an occasion of public worship, dialogue and reflection. The Chapel welcomes individuals and families from both the University and wider community: individuals with no religious affiliation; those seeking such an affiliation; and those who choose a place for worship, meditation and fellowship, such as the Chapel, because of its wide range of religious expression through liturgy, music and discussion. Special music each week by Kirkpatrick Choir. A quiet place open for meditation daily, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Special music programs during the academic year every Tuesday, 12:15 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. A very special and popular, holiday program of carols and music in December, and other programs during the academic year.

For information on the Sunday speakers and other programs, call the Chapel office to be placed on the mailing list.

Kirkridge. A retreat and study center committed to spiritual formation and transformation. Its director, Robert Raines, writes: "Our intention is to address pressing human issues with the resources of biblical faith. . . Our purpose has often been expressed in the phrase: Picket and Pray. We believe in the integration of personnal growth and social change. We are committed to working out peace and justice imperatives in our own lives and in the structures of our society . . . Kirkridge is located on a mountainside in northeastern Pennsylvania. We have several facilities on about one hundred acres. The Appalachian Trail runs through our property at the top of the mountain, where the vistas are long. In the valley, gentle pastureland surrounds our 1815 farmhouse. The earth setting offers its own healing, grounding touch to our space. . . . Simple living is both a choice and a necessity at Kirkridge. We believe that one of the most important gifts to ourselves and the earth is the conservation of water, wood, energy, and other resources. . . . Kirkridge was founded in 1942 by John Oliver Nelson, a Presbyterian Clergyman, who was inspired by the Christian community on the Scottish island of Iona." Seminar leaders at Kirkridge include Daniel Berrigan, Matthew Fox, Sam Keen, Joanna Rogers Macy, Virginia Mollenkott, Parker Palmer, and many others. For information, write to: Kirkridge, R.D. 3, Bangor, PA 18013 – (215) 588-1793.

The Sirius Community. Offers "a quiet sanctuary for meditation and contemplation of new directions, and people who will provide help and support in learning to follow your own inner direction." There are monthly sweat lodges, a free Sunday open house, and community living experiences of various kinds. Emphasis is on alternative lifestyles and visions. Workshops are offered in Zen Buddhism, Native American spirituality, and similar topics. Founded in 1978 by a former member of Findhorn, Sirius is a educational center and spiritual community of twenty-five members. Its purpose is "to live in attunement with God's Will, in harmony with all humanity and in oneness with the kingdoms of nature. . . ." For more information, contact: Sirius, Baker Rd. Shutesbury, MA 01072 – (413) 256-8015

The Surrender Group sponsored by the Fellowship In Prayer meets weekly at the Princeton Friends Meeting (School Building) on Thursday nights between 8 and 10 pm. All are welcome. Transportation and information are available by calling the Fellowship office (609) 896-3636 during business hours.

The Surrender Group is intended to be open to persons from a broad range of backgrounds, and is primarily concerned with practical ways through which we may learn "to surrender ourselves as the center of our lives and to accept Truth as the center, and thus to discover a way of life that brings meaning, affection, joy, and some measure of inward peace".

Tales of the Wise and Foolish

Which one is the Redeemer?

An abbot became very worried because morale was low in the monastery, and very few pilgrims were coming to visit. The abbot tried every method he knew to make the monks more enthusiastic about their calling, but nothing seemed to work. Driven to desperation, he decided to visit a Jewish hermit who lived in the mountains nearby.

Arriving secretly at night so that no one would know that the was forced to consult a Jew on such matters, the abbot approached the hermit with great hesitation.

"This is not easy for me to admit," the abbot concluded, "especially to you, but I need help. What do you suggest we do to re-discover our calling?"

The hermit did not speak. Instead, he led the abbot to a rock on which were carved some Hebrew characters.

"There is your answer," the hermit said.

"But I cannot read this," the abbot confessed.

"Then I will translate," the hermit replied. "This is the great secret which I have been guarding here all alone in the mountains for the past forty years. All this time I have meditated on this text, which is also the answer to your monastery's problem. The text which I have received from the Most High simply states, 'The Redeemer liveth!' "

The abbot's heart began pounding rapidly. "What do you mean?" he asked. "And what has this to do with the problem at my monastery?"

"After many years of brooding over these words, it was at last revealed to me that the Redeemer is now here on earth, and that he in fact is living in your monastery."

"Do you mean that Christ has come back," the abbot asked, "and that one of my monks is He?"

The hermit did not speak another word. He simply looked at the abbot with an expression at once sad and tender.

The abbot returned to the monastery with his heart full of wonder and fear. He studied each face – familiar, ordinary faces – or at least so they once seemed, but now each one seemed charged with mystery. Which one was the Christ? And how should the Christ be treated? The abbot brooded night and day on such questions.

At last, he could bear the burden of this secret no longer. He told the elder what he had happened. Soon the word spread throughout the monastery. Each monk was struck with amazement, fear, and wonder.

The monks' behavior changed dramatically. They worked with new vigor, each vying with the other to be more loving and self-sacrificing. Pilgrims who visited sensed the monks were filled with incredible energy and love, and soon the monastery was thronged with visitors.

Many years later, when the abbot was sick and nearing death, he called for the hermit to come to his bedside. When the hermit appeared, looking

no different than he had twenty years before, the abbot asked,

"Before I die, there is one thing I must know. Which one of my brother monks is the Christ? Which one is my Redeemer? They all seem so ordinary, and yet so special. Even in the humblest, the stupidest, and the most difficult, I sense something divine, something that reminds me of the Christ. So I am never sure which one is my Redeemer."

"Haven't you yet guessed the secret?" the hermit asked.

"I think that I have," the abbot said with a smile. It was so simple, and so obvious, that the abbot did not know whether to laugh or cry. The Redeemer was living in the monastery, and his dwelling place was abbot's heart and the hearts of all he loved and served.

"Now I can depart in peace," the abbot said softly. Smiling, the hermit reached down and held his hand.

Which is the Higher Way?

A young student went to a Sufi teacher and asked, "I have heard that the way of the West is communion with God, and the way of the East is union with God. Can you explain which way is higher?"

"My friend," the Sufi replied, "When there are two airplanes in the air, one at twenty thousand feet, and the other at ten thousand feet, and you are on the ground, what difference does it make to you which is higher?"

* *

Notes on Our Contributors

"Temptation" is reprinted by permission from THE LITTLE LAMP, vol. 24, Number 3: Autumn 1984 "On the IMITATION OF CHRIST" by Eknath Easwaran; Nilgiri Press, Petaluma, CA. Easwaran is also the author of books on Gandhi and Badshah Khan, a "non-violent soldier of Islam" for one of the most war-like people in the world, the feared Pathan's of the Khyber Pass. In 1960 Easwaran founded the Blue Mountain Center of Meditation in Berkeley, California, where he conducts weekly classes. For further information, write Nilgiri Press, Box 477, Petaluma, CA 94953.

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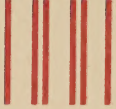

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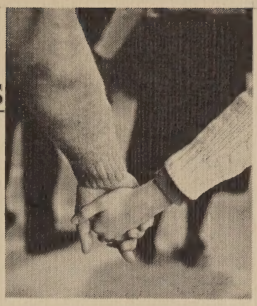

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You must cease to be aware of yourselves. You must be nothing but an ear which hears what the universe of **THE WORD** is constantly saying within you. The moment you start hearing what you yourself are saying, you must stop.

Dou Baer of Mezritch

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